

Corps Programs - The Rest of the Story

In response to March media coverage in the Washington Post about the programs of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, we believe readers deserve the rest of the story. Projects that are constructed by the U. S. Army Corps of Engineers solve the nation's complex water resource problems, are a critical part of our strong economy, and are many faceted. Just to look at one aspect is only part of the story.

The sand we put on the beaches is a good investment in the long run, protecting homes, businesses and public infrastructure from hurricanes and coastal storms. Perhaps more important, beaches are the number one tourist destination, and tourism employs one out of every 8 people in the United States. In Miami Beach alone, foreign tourists spend \$2.4 billion annually-50 times the cost of the Miami Beach nourishment project. Pumping sand on the beach makes good economic sense, especially if done in an environmentally sensitive manner-which we do.

The Corps regulatory program does permit some wetlands to be affected after a deliberative process that evaluates economic and public interest factors as well as aquatic resources. However the program also results in the avoidance of impacts on uncounted thousands of acres; and for each acre that is affected we routinely require those applying for permits to provide mitigation that exceeds the amount of wetlands impacted. This year's proposed budget will provide funds to more closely monitor these mitigation requirements.

Inland navigation operates as a system, much like the highway system. Mainstem waterways are like interstate highways - through routes that carry most of the traffic. Smaller tributary waterways act as secondary roads, allowing commerce on and off the main routes and providing access to communities not located on the main waterways. These tributary waterways carry less traffic, but, like neighborhood streets, they play a vital role in linking communities to the system as a whole. These portions provide critical shipping links for small farms and businesses, and the system provides an environmental alternative to clogging the nation's highways.

Corps programs create thousands of jobs in the federal and private sector. These programs not only support our economic and environmental well-being, but also support military readiness, disaster response, homeland security and the war effort. You are encouraged to learn more about the Army Corps of Engineers, a linchpin in the nation's economy, by checking out our website for more information: <http://www.usace.army.mil/> and to learn the rest of the story.